

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 8, Issue 2 February 2008

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

January's meeting was a big success! We finally had our Club Election and Christmas Party! I think everyone had a good time and enjoyed themselves at the party. We had lots of good food, and I thank all who brought the food and snacks. I want to thank Niki Shaffer for organizing all of the activities and games. They were very interesting and fun. I also want to thank Dawn Breer, of Sweet Peas for bringing her bird toys to the party and offering them at a discount to club members. Dawn has made a lot of our members' birds very happy.

I also want to thank all of the members and guests who were able to come to the meeting. Without your help and support there would be no GPC.

Our GPC Elections were also held during the January meeting. I would like to congratulate everyone who was elected. We have a good slate of officers and board members and we can look forward to another successful year for the GPC. See elsewhere in the SnT for election results.

We are still continuing our plans for our August fair, establishing committees, soliciting vendors and speakers. And, as always, we welcome any suggestions and new ideas from our members. Please, give us your input.

See you at the Meeting. ---- Dave

Tidbits

Trey Shaffer

January Meeting – We had the January meeting on schedule, without interference from the weather, and took care of business with the delayed elections; got right down to business with our delayed holiday party. Christine Kinkade provided the core of the meal with ham and potatoes, and we filled out the table with dishes from everyone else. Niki put together a “Birdie Bingo” game and we built bagel/peanut butter/oatmeal toys for our bird friends.

Elections – We held elections at the January meeting. Nancy Marron was retained as Treasurer. Niki Shaffer is our new Membership Secretary. Jim Berk, Dawn Breer and Christine Kinkade were elected to our Board of Directors. See separate article about the election. Related to the elections, and the cancelled December meeting, the Board voted to do the obvious. All existing positions were extended until the election occurs and new offices will be effective as of the election. We will get something in the by-laws to that effect.

Dues – We have a new Membership Secretary, and her first task is to collect all those overdues. So make it easy on her and send a check, or pay up on the website...

Quaker Dominance Tales From The Bird Fairs

Cliff Patterson

I attend over fifty bird fairs a year and I see and hear a lot at them. One thing that I really hate happens every so often. I can always see it coming. A person approaches me with a bird carrier in their hands. This person might be male or female, young or old, white or minority, well dressed or shabby. It doesn't matter. It always happens the same way.

The person will say, “You like Quakers, right? Well, I want to get rid of mine. He used to be nice, but now he's mean and nasty. He bites me all the time. I can't even feed him without getting bitten. Will you buy him?”

I look into the carrier, and there's a poor little Quaker, scared half to death, trying his best to look tough and mean. I'll put my hand in and he'll run from me. I corner him, and he will give me a couple really nasty bites. I ignore them, and pull him out and bring him to my chest and start talking to him softly. I'll start scratching his head, and soon he's relaxed and enjoying the attention.

Inevitably, the person will say something like, "How did you DO that?" I then explain to them that Quakers like to test their owners to see who the boss is. If they bite you and you let them get away with it, they soon decide that that must mean that THEY are your boss.

As your boss, they feel free to bite you whenever they feel like it. In fact, they will bite you occasionally just to remind you who the boss IS in your relationship.

Also, like dogs, birds can sense fear. If you're afraid of them, they know it. This is also an open invitation for them to bite.

I will trim the little bird's wings and ask his owner if he wants to try holding him like I am. I tell them that I will show them how to deal with their Quaker and get him back to being the sweet little guy he used to be. Unfortunately, they usually decline and just ask me how much I will pay them.

I always buy the bird, because I feel that if I can do something to help a poor little misunderstood Quaker, I have to. I then give him two or three weeks of intensive love and attention, and soon he's just as cuddly as he was when he was a baby. Then I will find him a good new home, and have the satisfaction of knowing that I've improved the life of a sweet little Quaker.

If you are having trouble with your Quaker, you have to nip it in the bud. When he bites you, you have to say, "NO!" sternly. If he continues, you have to give him a "time out" just as you would with a child, and put him back in his cage and ignore him for a while.

A useful technique that many people use is to watch your Quaker when he's on your hand. You can usually tell when he's getting ready to bite you, and a small "birdy earthquake" can take his mind off of it.

Remember, when your bird is bad, you need to remain calm and talk to him in a level, stern voice. Tell him, "No bite!" without raising your voice or giving him any kind of drama reward. If he continues to be bad, you have to put him back in his cage and even cover it. The ultimate punishment is the withdrawal of Momma's love and attention.

Another problem that Quaker owners occasionally will run into is the one-person bird. Your bird will completely adore you, but will bite your husband or child.

This is also a pecking order problem. The bird has decided that you're the big bird, he's next, and the rest of the family is on the bottom. Obviously, this is unacceptable.

What I recommend is that you pick up your Quaker, bring him right in front of your face, and say, "Okay, now we're going to go visit Daddy." Then, place the bird on your spouse's hand while he's standing right next to you and remain right there. Your bird will tolerate this for a few minutes, as a favor to you. Then take him back and tell him what a good little bird he is.

You need to do this every day, once or twice a day. After a few days, you can try walking away but staying in the room while your spouse holds the bird. Soon, you can even leave the room for a minute. Your spouse should talk softly to the bird while he's holding him, and even slowly attempt to pet him.

Soon your bird will come to tolerate your spouse. He will still prefer you, of course, but he will understand that you want him to be nice to your spouse.

Remember, if your bird is developing bad habits, it's up to you to correct them before things progress to the point where I see you coming toward me with a bird carrier in your hand!

Your Last Bird

Trey Shaffer

Lions and tigers and bears... Oh my!

But parakeets?

Gorillas and crocodiles and wolves... Oh my!

But canaries?

Have you considered the fact you might never be able to have another bird? Never be able to take your bird out of the house, or be fined \$500 - \$1,000? No more GPC Fair? Sounds bizarre doesn't it?

That legislation was proposed in the Missouri House of Representatives on January 24, as House Bill 1847. Before you get too upset, it will probably not go through... at least this time...

I have to admit, my days of political activism faded with the sixties, but this week I was calling politicians. The first I heard of this came from Irene Pepperberg, then Cliff Patterson and then it snowballed.

So what's it all about? Apparently Missouri has a problem with wild animals kept as pets. The bill is available on our website, as a document, or [here on the State website](#). The bill makes it illegal to keep wild animals as pets, and outlines a program of enforcement, penalties and licensing for existing animals that may be retained. The amazing thing is the definition of wild animals, which explicitly includes, "**Birds, including parrots, parakeets, finches, doves and pigeons, and canaries**".

Before I get into more detail about the language of the bill, here is information about the people behind it.

The bill's sponsor is:

Beth Low, Democrat, representing District 39 of Kansas City. (573) 751-4485, beth.low@house.mo.gov

Co-sponsors are:

Sara Lampe, Democrat, representing District 138 of Springfield; (573) 751-1460, sara.lampe@house.mo.gov

Maria Chappelle-Nadal, Democrat, representing District 72, University City: (573) 751-4265, maria.chappellenadal@house.mo.gov

All three started in the House in 2004, and should be running again this year...

Feel free to contact them, if fruitless actions help assuage your anger. I called all three, identified myself as associated with GPC and spoke with staff members who dutifully took my contact information and promised return calls... No callbacks. Ms. Low also failed to reply to an email inquiry. Hey what the heck, Low and Lampe could tell my phone number wasn't in their district. I don't know about Chapelle-Nadal, since she is from this area and we have members in her district.

Chappelle-Nadal did give Cliff a one line email response saying, "**It was an oversight to exempt the birds. It will be taken care of so there won't be a problem later on.**" Now that makes about as much sense as the bill's language, because birds were not "exempted" they were specifically included with the language quoted above.

So it appears the bill's sponsors don't like birds, don't understand the intent of the bill, or don't understand the language of the bill. Without feedback from legislators we can only conclude from its language it intends to eliminate pets except for dogs and cats, they didn't mention fish, and impact the business channels supporting pet owners. I spoke with PetSmart's corporate counsel for legislative initiatives, and they hadn't heard of this bill yet, but were interested. I thought a business lobby would be an effective ally in this.

Most of this activity was on Monday and Tuesday, January 28-29, after the bill was introduced the preceding Thursday. By Wednesday we had word the bill was "dead," but I'm not sure the source. The State's bill tracking website still lists the status as, "**Read 1st time January 24, 2008 and copies ordered printed.**"

Let your Representative know how you feel about this legislation. Find your representative on the Missouri House of Representatives' website at, <http://www.house.mo.gov> On the lower right-hand corner of the page is a place where you enter your ZIP code and find your legislator's contact page. Please note, you must use your nine digit, ZIP+4, code.

Part Deux

Ok, an update on the legislation. Call me lazy. I wrote the preceding article on Sunday, 2/3, after contacting the legislators Tuesday, 1/29. The following week I did get some feedback. Rather than rewrite the previous article, here is an update...

I feel better from the perspective pet birds will not be impacted. I'm not sure I feel good about legislators introducing bills without having read or understood their content and implications. Following is an email from Beth Low, the bill's sponsor.

Dear Trey

HB 1847 is based on ASPCA boilerplate legislation. The goal is to provide a modicum of oversight for the breeding, selling and ownership of wild animals. You may not be aware that this is a significant problem in Missouri, where we have no laws governing the proper care, registration, etc of wild animals. This has made Missouri the go-to state for purchasing large cats, just to name one example.

The language regarding birds will be changed in committee (should the bill receive a hearing) so that birds will be listed among the exempted animals (along with gerbils, for example). However, the overall goal of making sure that wild animals are properly and responsibly cared for, and are tracked by local authorities for the benefit of public health and safety, will remain intact. As you may note, the bill has not yet been assigned to a committee.

Thank you,
Rep. Low

So Representative Low scores a point for responding to my email. I have a hard time with the excuse that the language is the ASP-CA's fault. If a legislator wants to use outside resources, fine, but I don't think legislation is a cut-and-paste activity. Representative Low presents the bill as "a modicum of oversight for the breeding, selling and ownership of wild animals." While there is some language about care standards for animals, it applies only to the narrow group of acceptable owners, essentially medical and research institutions. The overall effect of the bill is to make the keeping of these animals illegal. And that seems to be what "will remain intact" if and when the bill moves forward.

So I still don't understand clearly what the intent of the bill is. If Representative Low's description of its intent is accurate, it still seems like a bad document.

Someone will have to help me with my Missouri legislative procedures. Others have said the bill is "dead." Representative Low points out the bill has not been assigned to a committee, which seems to imply that is a required next step in its lifecycle. Maybe it is the Committee's job to figure out what the bill is supposed to do and then (re)write it so it makes sense.

Besides Representative Low's email, I also got a call back from a legislative aide in the office of one of the co-sponsors. I apologize for not getting the Representative's name; I was on a weak connection, having trouble hearing. She did acknowledge the language regarding birds WOULD be changed *IF* the bill went forward, again implying that would be unlikely. Apparently this bill raised quite a reaction from concerned organizations across the country.

So "bird people" are pretty well organized and aware of what goes on in legislatures across the country. We can relax on this one, and leave it to the reptile folks to carry on the battle, since their pets will become illegal...

Recipe of the Month

Banana Nut Muffins

Posted by: Barry - barry@newwave.net - May 8, 1996

Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup cheddar cheese
- 3/4 cup chopped bananas
- 1/2 cup nuts, finely chopped
- 2 eggs with shell
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

Directions:

Mix the dry ingredients in a bowl. Wash the eggs thoroughly, blenderize including the shell, add the oil, and mix well. Add the eggs and oil to the dry ingredients. Spoon into greased muffin cups. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes in a 375 degree oven, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Recipe from the [Birds n Ways website, www.birdsnways.com](http://www.birdsnways.com)

Cockatoos Love 'em or Leave 'em

Sue Owens

It was two years ago this month an alien being entered our lives. He came with the odd name of Tooie (but calls himself Boo-Boo which somehow seems more appropriate, given his penchant for causing them). I found him on PetFinders.com. He was in foster care with Perfectly Precious Pet Rescue and Adoption. His picture was marked with a big red warning symbol – I think it might have been the circle with the diagonal line through it. Naturally, this made him even more desirable. He was a 14 year old male Mol-lucan cockatoo.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread, it is said. It wasn't till after he came home that I discovered that male Mollies are notoriously one of the most unpredictable, aggressive, loud, dare we say psycho? of all parrot species commonly kept as pets. Tooie/Boo definitely fits the bill. He is also very affectionate, frequently hilarious, a great showman – a one-pound entertainment center in a peach-colored package.

These guys are certainly not for everyone. Sadly, I am the only one in my household who loves Boo-Boo despite his mercurial mood swings. Even his "siblings" the other parrots often yell at him to shut up. Maybe I feel akin to this strange creature because he is so like me at times – "Come here and love on me now!" "If you look at me again I will bite your ear off, yes!" "Let's be happy and SING together!" I find his 'too conversations entrancing. He will talk and vocalize for an hour in a language only he can understand, which still sounds so very human. It is like overhearing a family in the India food aisle at the Global Market discussing what they want for dinner.

We don't know Tooie/Boo's actual hatchday, so March is when we celebrate (some around here would call it mourn) the day he came to share the planet with us. Happy Hatchday, my dear little friend. May we have many more together.

Ode to My Cockatoo

*You came into my life one day,
Flaunting your beautiful fairy feathers.
Each one an eloquent silent word
as you try to tell me things I cannot understand.
Could you be saying "Hey stupid, my water is filthy"?
I love your eyes, so dark and fathomless,
Ancient and wise, circled by dark blue rings,
That match the bruises you gave me.
Gossamer feathers that display your moods,
and hide your beak from the foolish!
O, the gnarled and wrinkled claws,
harkening of your ancestry, and clinging to
my fleeing back – you can jump, I see now.
Woodwork comes and goes, scabs fall off.
But fingers forever remember the softness
of salmon, peach and ivory.*

You can visit Tooie/Boo on-line at:

<http://www.myspace.com/tooiethegreatandterrible>

Please urge your friends who want a parrot too to consider adoption!

Perfectly Precious Pets may be found on-line at:

<http://members.petfinder.com/~MO163/ppra.htm>

Book Picks of the Month

Christine Kinkade

A thank you to Ruth Anderson for donating the vhs tape "Your Pet's Perspective" to the GPC Library. It is listed below with this month's Library Picks.

Here are this month's picks:

Your Pet's Perspective by Jane Hallander

A VHS tape by Jane Hallander, an internationally known animal communicator. The tape is designed to help you learn to communicate telepathically with your animals, including companion birds. (Color, 45 mins).

Birds of a Feather narrated by Marli Lintner, DVM

This VHS tape is a guide to bird basics. A unique video guide for new and experienced bird owners. (Color, 60 mins).

Bird Owner's Home Health & Care Handbook by Gary A Gal-lerstein, DVM

This book gives readers all the essential information needed to properly care for their birds in all situations, such as housing, general care, feeding, bird anatomy, what to do for accidents & illnesses, diseases, taming, and training. (292 pages).

The African Grey by Julie Rach

A complete up-to-date resource book that includes websites of interest to bird owners. Everything you need to know about behavior and well-being of your African Grey. Color pictures. (126 pages).

Beginner's Guide to Cockatiels by Cyril H. Rogers

A short book introducing the reader to the care and keeping of cockatiels. Color pictures and b&w illustrations. (44 pages).

Guide To A Well-Behaved Parrot by Mattie Sue Athan

A parrot-care handbook that helps you understand parrot psychology as the first step in dealing with the most common parrot behavior problems ---- screaming, biting, and feather chewing. Full-color photos. (143 pages).

GPC members can check out any of these featured picks at this month's meeting. Please note that some books are quite old and some of the information may be a little outdated. Please keep this in mind when reading the books.

A complete listing of the GPC library is available on the GPC website www.GatewayParrotClub.org. If you wish to check out any of these, or any of our books, please contact me prior to the next GPC meeting by phone (636) 343-8097, or email at Librarian@GatewayParrotClub.org, and I will bring them to the next meeting.

All books checked out should be returned at the following GPC meeting. If that is not possible, please return the books by mail to Christine Kinkade, 2412 Angela Dr., High Ridge, MO. 63049-2848.

Happy reading!

Christine

The Biological, Ethical, and Human Health Aspects of Wildlife Conservation and Rehabilitation

James M. Harris, DVM

Release No 11, November 2005

We humans evolved as a species connected to and part of the flora and fauna with which we share. It has been suggested that our mental and emotional health in some ways is partly dependent on the opportunity for us to nurture. This relationship existed for eons until recent times. The rise of the Industrial Revolution, improved health care, and the human population explosion all contri-

buted to human numbers exceeding their loading capacity. Overpopulation, land acquisition, agriculture, and the urbanization of society has led to massive habitat destruction and humans isolated from the "Living Environment."

Our technologically-oriented society has reached out to nature to make amends for the destruction we have created. The question now is: how much good are we accomplishing and how much real and potential damage are we doing with our efforts?

In the 1970's, the California Condor Project started. The species was reduced to less than 20 birds. Evolved as a carrion eater of large herbivores, the species was biologically doomed with the extinction of the woolly mammoth and other large hoof stock that roamed North America. Lead and poisons introduced by humans further reduced their numbers. One of the biologists working on the project was asked by the press why bother saving condors? His reply is a classic to be remembered by us all. To paraphrase his answer: "The reason to save condors is not so much that man needs condors but, in developing the skills and techniques required to save condors, Man may learn to save himself!"

Conservation and wildlife rehabilitation are the buzz words of our efforts to reconnect with nature. Species close to extinction are often kept in captive breeding programs, but if the genetic pool is limited, one must wonder if there is a viable population to work with. Furthermore, if there is no habitat suitable for release, the numbers produced have no chance for a free existence, but are doomed to spend their lives in captivity. When down to the last member of a species, we now toy with the fantasy of freezing it hopeful that, one day, we can recreate it from the genetic material in the freezer.

In the last three decades, wildlife rehabilitation has become a popular endeavor, reasonably well organized in "First World" countries, but always lacking funds. Centers, training programs, and international organizations have rushed in to fill the need. Is this effort of any value to wildlife? What are the ethical, moral, and humane aspects of keeping and caring for wildlife? If an individual cannot be released because of some infirmity, is it appropriate to keep it confined in captivity for the term of its natural life. There is no such thing as an aged individual in "Nature."

Biologically, unless a rescued, rehabilitated individual can complete at least one successful reproductive cycle, the efforts to save it have been of no value to that species. Furthermore, there must be concern that during the period of time that the creature was cared for pathogens were not introduced that might have devastat-

ing effects on the wild population after reintroduction. Can this be addressed? Where is the funding for this?

An example from first-hand experience involved California murrelets ("U algae") oiled off the coast of North America. The birds were de-oiled and kept in a facility located in a municipal park by International Bird Rescue Research Center, an organization formed in the early 1970's, to care for oiled sea birds. There were about 27 birds in this group. After de-oiling, some were released to swim back to the offshore islands they came from. The released birds were not strong enough and were recaptured shortly after release when washed up on the beach. A few days later, proliferative lesions started to form at the commissures of beaks. These rapidly progressed to massive lesions of the head and all the birds died. They all ate well until death, some dying with fish in their mouths. The first pathologist that evaluated the tissue sections of lesions described papillomas and suggested that this may have spread from fish in the area that were known to have a viral papilloma. Further examination revealed Bollinger bodies. The birds had classic pox. It was discovered that avian pox was endemic in the blackbirds in the park and there was a high population of mosquitoes and biting flies in the area. If the affected birds had returned to their islands where there were huge swarms of biting flies the whole population of birds, some 200,000 breeding pairs might have been lost.

Good Intentions, Bad Ideas

During the early 1970's, birds arriving at oil spill receiving centers often had been seen first by "well-meaning" veterinarians. Some of these birds arrived accompanied by medical records listing observations and medications administered. Most birds had undergone "poly-pharmacy." In one case, 26 different medications had been administered by every conceivable route.

This brings us to another point: medicines, antimicrobials and the like, used unnecessarily or at improper doses for improper periods of time. The issue of antibiotic resistance is a can of worms we have opened and seem to ignore most of the time.

Human Health Issues

What are the issues involving humans in wildlife conservation and rehabilitation? Zoonotic diseases need to be addressed. Are workers current on tetanus protection? Rabies virus is an issue for those working with bats, great-horned owls, and mammals. Eye protection must be provided and in use when working with fish-eating birds. Personal hygiene is an issue with all activities. As

an example, Salmonella species must be assumed to be an issue when working with all reptiles. If volunteer manpower is used, are people briefed on issues of death and loss? Is there a mental health care professional available? People who "rescue" creatures are at increased risk of having pathological grief responses when loss occurs. Personalizing and humanizing creatures also puts people at increased risk of burnout. These issues must be addressed in training sessions prior to having volunteers participate in programs. Professionals can also be at risk when overwhelmed by the extent of a situation. We must always remember to care for the caregiver.

Finally, there must be realization that monitoring programs, subjects, and human participants requires an expenditure of funds in addition to the actual costs of the rehabilitation and conservation efforts.

Release #11, November, 2005. The Association of Avian Veterinarians welcomes membership from veterinarians with an interest in avian medicine. Annual meetings and a quarterly journal provide a format for the latest in avian medical information. Is your veterinarian a member?

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2008 Schedule

Here are our meeting dates for 2008. We will post more information about meeting topics as it becomes available. Unless noted, all meetings are at the Kirkwood Community Center, on the third Sunday of each month. The Board meeting is at 12:30 PM, followed by the general meeting at 2:00 PM.

2008 Schedule

February 17
March 16
April 20
May 18
June 8 (second Sunday)
July 20
August – Fair
September 21
October 19
November 16
December 14

Our Mission

The Gateway Parrot Club, Inc. is a not for profit organization established in 1988 to:

Bring people together in a friendly atmosphere in the interest of exchanging information on bird care and breeding.

Create interest in bird care and responsible breeding through monthly educational programs and annual bird fairs.

Reduce neglect, cruelty and abuse of captive birds through education and public outreach.

Educate the public, as well as ourselves, on the ever present danger of extinction in the wild.

Contact Information

We welcome your comments and suggestions...

Officers

President	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Vice President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 427-3679
Secretary	Cathy Wendler	(636) 586-0604
Treasurer	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
Membership	Niki Shaffer	(314) 853-5323

Board Members

Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Dawn Breer	(636) 464-8085
Suzanne Dohack	(636) 734-4527
Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317
Janet Draper	(314) 432-3019
Jim Berk	(636) 586-1445

Committees

Educa- tion/Outreach	???	
Hospitality	Pat Seiler	(636) 462-4732
Librarian	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Ways & Means	Suzanne Dohack	(636) 734-4527
Website /Newsletter	Trey Shaffer	(314) 432-4317